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WHAT ENGLAND OUGHT TO DO.

BY A CONTINENTAL OBSERVER.

THE writer of these pages has long been a sincere and devoted friend of England. He was not born on English soil. England did not give him life. She did not watch over his first steps nor protect his early years. But, no sooner had he found a voice capable of getting itself heard, than he vowed the most convinced and the sincerest admiration for the great and strong qualities which he detected, and which he still recognizes, in the British nation. He defended her interests. In the modest sphere assigned him he lent her his support whenever his conscience allowed him to do so.

But he would not and could not shut his eyes to the traits and things which seemed to merit legitimate criticism and just observation, even though these observations assumed in his mind an appearance of severity. He held that the moral grandeur of a nation is seen in the attentive simplicity with which it receives the just and sincere warnings given it by its real friends; and he was so situated, moreover, that he was able to judge both the strong and the weak sides of the English nation, and free, after having praised them with enthusiasm, to criticise them frankly and without fear.

The author of these pages has seen and heard and observed many things, and he has come now to the conviction that the moment is a grave one for England, that she has reached a parting of the ways where her choice of the route will be fraught with serious and prolonged consequences; for it depends upon her decision whether she will continue to loom more and more mightily on the horizon of history, or disappear in the fogs of the past.

The question "What England Ought to Do," was put to me some time ago, at the close of a conversation I had with a friend

who holds a conspicuous position in England, and who is held in much esteem abroad, and who, moreover, is very well acquainted with men and things of our epoch.

"In my opinion," I replied, "England ought above all to do two things: Create a regular and well disciplined army, and secure a well-armed diplomacy."

It was then and thus, after having formulated my opinion, that the idea came to me to develop and explain my thought, and to say to a larger audience, in addition to the answer that I had given to my friend's question, what, in my profound conviction, was still a third duty for England. This will form the latter portion of these pages.

I.

Ever since the Transvaal war, whenever a Unionist or Conservative speaker, or even a member of the Opposition, has addressed either House, he has indulged in enthusiastic and, I hasten to add, well-deserved, praise of the English army; and, throughout the world, impartial minds readily join with him in this eulogy. Whenever an Englishman has treated of this campaign in a public speech, he has dwelt with reason on the immensity of the effort which England has accomplished in transporting, almost with mathematical accuracy, an army of 250,000 men to a distance more remote than any which an army so important has hitherto ever had to traverse. Neither the Roman cohorts, nor the Greek legions, nor the armies of Napoleon, ever accomplished with such ease a task so gigantic. Moreover, even if this army had been less heroic, it is the simple duty of every Englishman to render to it the fullest homage, to proclaim its valor and its endurance and devotion. The abnegation and sacrifice demanded by war from all who take part in it on a battlefield, are such that, if the soldier could not count on the gratitude of his fellow-citizens, on possessing, in a word, a parcel of that glory due to every army in action, and to every member of such an army, the work of war, in an analytic and sceptical century like our own, would be utterly impossible.

I cannot but approve, therefore, all these Englishmen who have exalted the courage of the English army during the South African war.

This colossal South African improvisation could neither have

been undertaken nor successfully carried through by any other power in the world; and the Spanish Armada was but child's play in comparison with this formidable exodus from Portsmouth to Durban and the Cape. And it is just because this immense effort was an improvisation, just because the goal of the expedition was a land whose resources, temper, contour and defiles were unknown, that everything in the execution of this enterprise, save the ignorance that presided at its inception, should be praised and admired. But England would be irremediably destined to decline, if this South African war did not contain for her one of those supreme lessons which Providence gives to a land, and which is not renewed if the country does not know how to comprehend its decisive significance.

At the outset of the war, once on South African soil, the frightful inadequacy of the preparations made itself felt in all directions. The Commissariat, the Medical Corps, the Strategic Section, the Corps of Engineers, the organization of the battalions and of the high command—all betrayed lamentable defects and revealed a state of things big with menace. If the English army escaped the complete destruction toward which it was being led, it was due, first, to the heroism of the soldiers, to their untiring patience, their docility, their passive obedience and uncomplaining stoicism; but it was due also, and above all—and this should be well understood and proclaimed—to the complete absence of military instruction in the enemy. The Boers had in their favor the ingrained arrogance of their temperament, an armament rendered redoubtable by their personal decision, but the handling of which was so much beyond them that they were unable to make out of it all that might have been made. At Colenso, where the two armies were face to face, the English general, disdaining or ignorant of all the new laws imposed upon armies by modern weapons, ordered the most astonishing and inconceivable of manœuvres. He had his artillery, so to speak, covered by his infantry and cavalry, thus making it an obstacle to, rather than a protection for, the dash of his troops; and he surrendered this heroic army blindly to the invisible balls of the Boers. Who can say what the disaster would have been for the English army, after the dreadful day of Colenso, if the Boers had not been ignorant of the first elements of scientific warfare; if, with their cavalry, their arms, and backed by their artillery and perhaps by the guns captured

from the enemy, they had undertaken an organized, scientific pursuit, and effected, as they certainly might have done, the rout, and perhaps the utter destruction of Sir Redvers Buller's army?

Everywhere, in the first period of the war, at Spion Kop as elsewhere, the same thing happened. The Boers, rapid, invisible, inaccessible, decimated the English lines, and then, satisfied with the victory won, made no effort to follow it up and to reap its fruits by pursuit and destruction of the English army. The Boers, quite without military instruction, but of a resourceful and dashing courage, had no inkling of the art of manœuvring in mass, of fighting on a wide field of battle, and of avoiding, save by retiring or by flight, the enveloping movements of the foe, whenever the enemy was strong enough to undertake a flank movement or to take the Boers within two fires. In the open field they were absolutely inferior, and the sieges of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith showed this clearly enough, for their assaults upon these towns were primitive and childish from the point of view of the art of war. Even when Lord Roberts inaugurated the second phase of the war by the capture of Cronjé, it was the ignorant obstinacy of the Boer general, rejecting the advice of Villebois-Mareuil to save himself by a policy of retirement by sections, that facilitated the fine strategic scheme of the English marshal. In a word, to sum up my whole thought, I should say that the English fought, at least at the outset, as if they were fighting before 1870, and that the Boers, better armed, and with a greater passion for personal independence, fought as the Zulus or the Basutos might have done. It would really be to despair of human intelligence if England now, at the issue of this war, and face to face with her destinies, were not to draw from recent events profound and lasting instruction, and did not, as speedily and energetically as possible, undertake the reforms forced upon her by this war, which is henceforth merely a vain struggle of a conquered race against a victorious race.

Some time ago, an Englishman in high position, who is certainly well acquainted with the temper of his compatriots and the ideas of his government, said to me: "We are not going to insist on obligatory and general military service, but we are going to build up the army which we require by volunteer service, and we are rich enough to pay our volunteers." I would not exaggerate the effect which these words made upon me, but utterances like

these from such lips filled me, I confess, with profound apprehension. Anything short of general and compulsory military service will be but a palliative, and England's enemies—that is to say, alas! owing to numerous and complex causes, almost the whole of Europe—will tremble with joy when they learn as irrevocable England's decision to confine her efforts for the improvement of her present military system to a device so little radical as that forestalled by my friend.

Every one is aware, and I am as well aware of it as any one, that the idea of compulsory military service is repugnant to the English nation. It has been hitherto calm and proud in the thought that it has escaped this terrible burden, peculiar in one form or another to each of the Continental states, the obligation for each male member of the nation to serve under the flag, with the vast weight of standing armies in time of peace, and with all the consequences, economic and social, of this régime.

Yes, the idea of compulsory military service frightens the English mind, and the vast swarm of Englishmen engaged in the duties and tasks of normal life have listened indifferently to the click of firearms and to the voice of the cannons from over seas. So inveterate, indeed, in England is the repugnance for the materializing life of the barrack-room that the whole system of English education has all along constituted an intentional and premeditated contrast to the positive and military training mingled with all education throughout the Continent. The volunteer camps of England, in comparison with real military instruction, are what a boat-race is to a match between ocean liners, or a horse-race to a cavalry charge: it is a hygienic exercise intended to strengthen young British lungs. The Englishman's university training has hitherto been, and still is, part and parcel of his ideas on military matters. I one day asked a very brilliant Oxford man, who had been talking learnedly and instructively of Thucydides, Sophocles and Euripides, what he thought of the battle of Dorking. "The battle of Dorking," he replied; "I never heard of that." No, the university training, as well as the military training, with the tendency of the young Englishman's mind, must be transformed and made to comply with the exigencies of modern times, as seen in the other nations. To be sure, if the principles of a "Greater Britain" had not penetrated English minds; if England's sole aims were the defense of her possessions

acquired previous to the present epoch; if the attitude she means to maintain were merely one of inflexible defense, an army recruited as in the past would suffice; it would be largely sufficient to protect and to maintain her territories previously won, and there would be no need, as to-day there is, and as everything proves there is, of abandoning her meditative calm, of assuming the heavy and almost painful burden of a standing army recruited after the fashion that has inevitably been adopted by all the great Powers, with the exception of England and the United States. But the United States is a republic, and large standing armies are a menace for the independence of republics, since, when the ambition of their generals is aroused, the civil authority has not at its disposal power sufficient to counterbalance the aggressive aims of the military chiefs. Thus the United States, unless imperialism renders it excessively imprudent, will avoid organizing a large standing army based on compulsory military service. Long ago, republican France was warned as to the danger lurking in its standing army, and the spectacle of recent years is there to prove that the warning was not misplaced, for a republic has not that personified authority at the top who awes the pride of the generals and commands obedience even from the most powerful.

But England is a monarchy, strong in the loyalty of its sons, and so strong in this loyalty that no military usurpation menacing the most popular throne this century has known is possible on its soil. So that, just in proportion as standing armies, based on compulsory service, and forming an immense homogeneous and domineering mass, are a danger for republics, so do they become for monarchies a mainstay and a defense. When it is a case of a country like England, having within her own borders an agitated and discontented province, possessing beyond the seas India and the Nile Valley and Burmah, exercising suzerainty over Canada and Australia, and called upon, while defending herself, to defend Malta, Ceylon, Singapore, Mauritius, Hongkong, Trinidad, Jamaica, the Barbadoes, the Bermudas, and many another West Indian isle, as well; when she has interests in Africa, in Asia, and, in a word, everywhere in the uttermost parts of the globe; it would be irony of ironies, it would be the rashest folly, to pretend to be ready to rise to these unparalleled and multiple responsibilities of imperial defense, by the sole organization of a volunteer army, on whatever principle such an army could be

formed. At any moment, in any quarter of the globe, England may be attacked, imperilled, without her having either the right or the power to put herself in a state of defense, and withal being forced to cover, by her armed intervention, any point whatever of the limitless empire where floats her flag. This we saw clearly enough in the Transvaal. The Boers, to be sure, both madly and hypocritically, launched against England the challenge of their ultimatum. They even assumed the offensive, counting on their rapid successes to arrest England's arm. But it was, nevertheless, England that was obliged, in presence of this attitude which she could not tolerate, immediately to assume the offensive, and to make the astonishing and admirable effort which she has just shown to the world. But I maintain, and this I say because I am summing up multiple and absolutely competent views, that if, instead of flinging upon African soil 250,000 volunteers of every sort, she had transported thither a regular, well disciplined army, organized with the mathematical precision of Continental standing armies, an army, say, of 100,000 men, this would have largely sufficed, even in the immense extent of the field of the South African war, to bring the thing to a speedy end. For it is not merely the soldiers who would have been ready, by their serious military training, to cope with the difficulty, but also the great chiefs, whose military science would have been on a level with that of Continental generals, and we should not have witnessed the blunders which England's friends beheld with sorrow and even with dismay.

At the outset of the Transvaal war, I read in a foreign paper, the name of which I have forgotten, a letter from an English superior officer, indignantly repudiating the lessons which German officers pretended to give his English colleagues, and he said: "We need no lessons from the Germans. We are the hardest working and the best educated officers in the world." This is, no doubt, true. But it is perhaps in Thucydides that these officers have completed their education, and neither the repeating rifle, nor the quick-firing gun, nor smokeless powder, existed in the time of Thucydides; and the greatest warriors of ancient Greece would have been beaten, they and their heaviest hoplites, by a single modern French battery, by two battalions of Highlanders, or by two companies of German cuirassiers.

The formation of a standing army, based on compulsory serv-

ice, as numerous as her home defense, and the protection of her colonies and her possessions impose upon England, remains henceforth for her a question of life or death. Thus only can she attain the point reached by other nations in the scientific instruction of officer and soldier. Thus only can she impose upon the foreigner such respect as will secure her against insult or disdain, and thus only, being no longer exposed to the defiance implied in the haughty attitude of the nations, will she be able to preserve a lasting peace, because visibly prepared for modern warfare. And thus, little by little, the nation, feeling more and more deeply the pride of the flag, and having the proud consciousness of being obliged to defend it, will be penetrated by that general patriotism which regular soldiers, recruited from every corner of the nation and from all ranks, finally succeed in inculcating in every citizen.

Never before has a nation given us the spectacle of men occupying a high position or holding the ear of the public, accusing, insulting, castigating their own nation while it was engaged in a formidable struggle. Yet this is what we have been seeing of late and what we are still beholding in England.

I am told that these men, whose names I would not mention, disapproved or opposed the war before it broke out. That I believe, and I do not impute their attitude to them as a crime. But what history will inevitably castigate in them is that, after having failed in their opposition to the war, they should have subsequently covered their country with insults, while her sons were exposed to the enemy's bullets. This patricide policy will appear unpardonable in the eyes of future generations. If my father wishes to fight a duel, I may do all I can to prevent him, if his cause appears to me unjust; and, on condition that, in my remonstrances, I do not transgress the bounds of the respect which I owe him, no one can blame me for my attitude. But if, during the duel, while the swords are being crossed, while he offers his breast to his adversary's sword-point, I myself deal him a blow which he cannot anticipate from a son, I commit the most infamous and monstrous of treasons. And so I say, and repeat that, in no country where standing armies exist—armies, that is, in the veins of whose soldiers flows the blood of the entire nation—was ever such a monstrosity seen.

Thus, the standing army which I am defending here would be for England at once her force and security, and the source of

an unflinching patriotism, the elements of which at present she does not possess. No, when Mr. Chamberlain said, "I do not care about the opinion of foreigners," he uttered a monstrosity; and, worse than this, Mr. Chamberlain's words are but the expression of the secret thoughts of all English statesmen. The main cause, indeed, of the antipathy felt toward England all over the world, is just this disdain which British statesmen profess for foreign opinion.

Now, it is a dangerous, illogical thing to do, thus to provoke by disdain the irritation of the world, and to have at one's disposal for its repression only the quite insufficient weapon now at England's disposal, considering the multiple provocations to which she is exposed. Moreover, England should make no mistake. The colonies have displayed devotion and loyalty; and although an effort has been made to belittle the importance of the sacrifice which they have made for the mother country, yet, the very fact of such a spontaneous and decisive manifestation has been enough to attract everybody's attention, and to reveal the broad and experienced spirit and the lofty views with which England has treated the colonies.

This attitude of the colonies, however, is not merely a one-sided demonstration. It would imply, if need be, the obligation on the part of the mother country to fly effectively to the defense of her menaced colonies; and we behold once again, therefore, the imperative necessity, in spite of the disdainful attitude of her rulers, of the formation of an important standing army.

I shall not undertake here to indicate, in detail, how such an army should be recruited; but there is no reason why I should not, after careful reflection, say that this army ought to number at least 600,000 men in peace-time, and for the moment, at least, in war-time. England has in Egypt 6,000 English troops, against 25,000 or 30,000 Egyptian troops. This may have sufficed for hostilities with the Dervishes, the Soudan hordes or even Mene-lik's troops. But it would become quite inadequate in the case of war with the Mussulmans; and England, which would have then to rely upon herself alone, would require at least 40,000 men. For a long time to come, England will be bound to maintain in the Transvaal a regular, well-seasoned, well-disciplined army ready for battle, numbering at least 60,000 men. India demands of her 100,000; Ireland 60,000; 100,000 are necessary to

meet all eventualities in the other colonies; 100,000 men are required in England and in Scotland, not to mention the mobile army of at least 100,000 men ready to be transported instantly, at home or abroad, to this or that point of her island coast, or of her dominions menaced over seas. So that, I repeat, she cannot get on without an army of 600,000 men and a corresponding military budget, if she wishes to keep herself intact, to say nothing of aggrandizement.

But I will go no farther. I shall not commit myself to any definite statement as to the mode of recruitment of this army, although, on the other hand, I should seem to be shirking a responsibility that I have freely assumed if I were not to state, just to discuss it, amend it, and complete it, later on, the system which I would myself prefer. My idea would be that this standing army should be formed by compulsory service based on the lot system, with facultative substitution. Military service would begin at twenty years of age. It would be active up to the age of twenty-five, with compulsory service in the reserve army from twenty-five to thirty. The active army, composed of 600,000 men, of which from 130,000 to 140,000 men would be recruited annually, would be permanent, with facilities for the temporary release from military obligations of 100,000 men, and, from the fifth year on, reserve forces also would reach the figure of 600,000 men. These troops would be called annually under the flag for a period of three weeks, and the economies resulting from the annual release of 100,000 men would meet the budgetary expenses annually for the reserve army. The rate for facultative substitution would be, in a country like England, relatively a high one, £160. This sum would be taken over by the State, which, at its risks and perils, would pay to the persons replacing their compatriots five per cent. annually. This, it should carefully be noted, only in the case of facultative substitution. This would amount to eight pounds a year, or thirteen shillings and four pence a month, or a supplementary payment of 5 1-3 pence per day. His service ended, the substitute would receive for his free disposal the sum paid in by the person whom he replaced. If he were in the colonies, or wished to settle there, he would not only be given a concession, but a sum would be advanced him on mortgage security, which, added to his substitute-rate, would allow him to settle down without fear of the future, and thereby

England would find herself gradually creating in her colonies, all over the world, farmers, tillers of the soil, and devoted and loyal subjects of the throne.

One might study the question of how to accumulate, for the soldiers of the regular army, a relatively modest sum, enabling them, at the end of their military service, to undertake in favorable circumstances the struggle for existence. These sums should be procured by means of the income tax, since it is for the security and tranquillity of those who live by their incomes that the soldiers of the regular army and their substitutes fight. Naturally, this system, like any other which might be sketched out, is merely an idea, which I venture to put forward, and I do not pretend that it is perfect nor yet applicable. But, as other systems may be proposed by competent men, I give this one here merely as a specimen, which I would not even undertake to defend, and which is capable of any or every modification, provided the formation of a standing army, recruited by compulsory service, energetically kept up to the level of military science, and alive to its duties toward the fatherland, be seriously effected.

II.

England has acted toward her diplomatic army as she has acted toward her military army. She has neglected its practical education. She has given it a bad organization. She has not accustomed it to regular and daily tasks; she has not taught it the social topography and the ethnography of the countries which she will have to fight. She has left the filling of the most important posts to caprice, to personal sympathies, or to considerations of birth. She has shifted to the South those who have failed in the North, and she has sent to the North those who failed in the South, as if the rebuffs of a diplomat were due to the climate and not to personal defects. And, finally, as in the case of her military army, she has organized neither the commissariat nor the armament, nor the ammunition necessary for an army constantly on the march and engaged daily with the enemy. The result is the inevitable one: England has been beaten everywhere.

English diplomacy everywhere is well-educated, punctual, obedient and discreet. It is well up in the treaties, it has an accurate knowledge of history. It knows the mooted points between the country that it represents and the country to which it is

accredited. But it wears the indelible stamp of its origin. Its politeness is mathematical; its greetings traditional; its amiability theoretical. It executes with a marvellous mechanism the orders it receives; it transmits with a graphophonic accuracy the communications made to it. It is an admirable instrument in the hands of those who direct it. But it has an immense fault, which, in the eyes of those who govern it, is perhaps a quality: it is not automatic.

With the rarest of exceptions, it passes through the most varied posts, changing country, and habits, and climate, and relations, but even as it set out so it returns, and as it returns so fared it forth.

No one makes it confidences, for the simple reason that it attracts none, nor solicits any; and, as it obeys with precision orders not less precise, it cannot invite confidences, for it can make none.

The English are blamed for possessing an insular soul. English diplomacy is the quintessence of this soul; and the soul of an English diplomat, from the beginning to the end, is kneaded of that insularity of which every truly British soul is composed. No diplomacy in the world takes such frequent leaves of absence. During the numerous journeys I have made pretty much everywhere, I have never met English diplomats, of every rank and sort, save either going or coming from their posts to their homes and *vice versa*. It is an incessant *chassé-croisé*. And this is due to the fact that any English diplomat can replace a colleague, or be replaced by a colleague, their missions being cut out for them by an almost implacable precision, and their acts and movements being traced for them with such mathematical accuracy that they have only to be a docile instrument of good will to be able to fulfil every order, and without effort to fill any place left vacant by the chance absence of any member of a legation or embassy.

The insularity of English diplomacy has given it an inordinate liking for residence in England, with an antipathy, or at all events an indifference, for sojourn elsewhere. Nowhere in the world is there a city which offers to these condensed Englishmen the attraction of London, with its clubs, its rapid visits to the country-house, the after-dinner conversation with a cigar about the dinner tables; the thousand and one normal, uniform, changeless things of which, at determined hours, with an implacable regularity, with a regimentary rigidity, London life is composed, when everything one does, every habit adopted, every costume worn, is a shibboleth

of one's *milieu* and "set." All these things have for the English diplomat abroad an irresistible and lasting charm. In the diplomatic post he holds, which he has coveted, because he desires absolutely and above all to preserve the classification belonging to him in society, every post is for him, not an exile, but a leave of absence, an obligatory sojourn, of which he supports courageously the load, but the weight of which he never ceases to feel.

What adds still more to the difficulties in the way of English diplomacy abroad, is that, like old men, at once presumptuous and naïve, it wishes to be liked and to make England liked solely for itself. With its lofty virtues, its rigid observance of the most austere laws and of public morality, it is reluctant to employ the ordinary methods, discountenanced by strict morals, employed by the other diplomacies throughout the world. It has no secret funds, and hardly possesses even the funds necessary to meet the requirements of its private police. The result we have seen a dozen times. We saw it when it was a question of creating bad blood between Germany and Russia; when it was a question of interrupting the march of Austria; when it was a question first of embittering and then of mitigating the relations between France and Italy; when it was a question of attenuating the Franco-German hatred, of confounding the interests of France and Russia, of separating those of England from those of Russia and France; and, finally, we beheld it triumphantly, irrefutably, when, in South African affairs, it was a question of arousing the whole world against England alone.

English diplomacy, in presence of the labors of the Transvaal agents during the long years in Austria, France, Germany, Russia and America, remained all but paralyzed, surprised, dumbfounded before it was able even to make the slightest movement of defense. England's projects were attacked, misconstrued, calumniated with startling unanimity, and not a single powerful voice dared to contradict the blunders, and confound calumniators.

I would not ruffle the austerity of English censors, nor revolt the modesty, the *pudor* of the Press Universal. I do not mean that it ought to have been, or ought to be, bought by ready money. In spite of all that has been said, and although journals and journalists have been mentioned publicly by name as having been quite ostensibly bribed by Rand gold and the Transvaal treasures, I do not believe it, and regard these assertions as libels. If

English diplomacy had been well informed, it would, in the first place, have known what was going on in the Transvaal, the preparations being made there, and the resources at the disposal, and the aims, of the Transvaal; all this it would have revealed to its government, which would have thus avoided the blunders into which it fell, and the calamities which England has undergone and is still undergoing. If English diplomacy had had the means of being well and exactly informed, it would, moreover, have revealed to its government the growth throughout the world of anti-English opinion, and, wherever it might be necessary, without bribing journals and journalists, it would have established powerful, enlightened, eloquent organs intended to combat vigorously error and to defend the truth.

I admit she would have spent some hundreds of thousands of pounds. I admit that she would have had to enter into the *mêlée*, undertake savage polemics in her battle with the contradictory opinions which she would have provoked. But she would have paralyzed the too facile enterprises of her country's foes. She would have prevented them from encouraging with impunity the aggressive arrogance of the Boers. She would have denounced and attacked the secret enrollment of soldiers throughout the world. She would have shown the Transvaal Republics the fallaciousness of the interventions on which they fancied they could count; and, even if she had been powerless to prevent the war, she would have had the means, the influence and the force necessary to prevent its prolongation, after the startling defeats which the English army has finally inflicted on the republican armies. In any case, if English diplomacy had been properly armed and provided with the "sinews of war," the conflict would long ago have been over. As the Transvaal war costs England £8,000,000 per month, if the action of her armed diplomacy could have abridged it by three months only, the £24,000,000 thus saved would have paid twenty times over for the secret funds that might have been placed at the disposal of this diplomacy.

The greatest diplomats of whom history has preserved the names have always held that one of the necessary conditions for a diplomacy really worthy of the name is mingling as actively as possible in the social and world-life of the country where it is established. It should try to know everything by listening to everything, and it should be able to listen to everything, because

able to be everywhere and to take part in everything. It should, therefore, have at its disposal all the means owing to which, in the most honorable or the most adroit way, a man has free entry wherever his presence can serve his objects and his duty as ambassador, not in order to listen behind closed doors, not to play the spy or to be a talebearer, but in order to breathe the ambient air in the midst of which he lives and moves, in order to become impregnated with the spirit of the country which it is his business to observe, and, if not to arrest, at least to canalize, the current which impels a government, a society or a nation toward an act of hostility against another government, nation or society.

English diplomacy has not all these resources and means at its disposal, and the consequence is that, everywhere, or almost everywhere, it lives as on an island which is difficult of access, and, in fact, whither access is facilitated only in official circumstances when no truth seeks to go ashore there, unless it be well disguised.

I have said enough for my readers to be able to complete my words by their personal conclusions. My opinion I have not to defend further. I merely hand it over to public discussion; and, if those who dispute me prove that they are right, I shall not undertake to defend an opinion which will have thus been shown to be false, nor to oppose views contrary to mine which shall thus have been shown to be true.

III.

It remains for me to touch upon a question which is at once delicate and rash, and which I would certainly not venture to discuss but for my desire to get at the truth, and my sincere friendship for England. For I feel that, in what I am about to say, I serve both the cause of England and that of peace, and consequently that of humanity as a whole.

A few years ago—in fact some long years now—I met at Naples, where he was taking a rest, the Duke of Fernand Nuñez, then retired to private life and seeking to recover his health. One day, the Duke said to me:

“When I was ambassador in Paris I called one day on the President of the Republic, and said to him, ‘If your excellency could take in hand the cause of my country, and bring Spain back into the concert of the great European Powers, you would render so great a satisfaction to our legitimate pride, and do us so great a service, that we

should remain everlastingly loyal and grateful to your country. You would have in the Councils of Europe, whenever they might be convened, a constantly friendly and faithful voice to acquiesce in your opinion and espouse your interests. We are, in reality, a great nation. We deserve the epithet, and we are worthy to figure in the European concert. We are divided in appearance, but united in a common patriotism. Our pride would stop at nothing to spare the nation any humiliation. We are in reality rich, and our rise to the foremost rank would give us a feeling of unity which would soon induce us to prove that our prosperity justifies our ambitions and accounts legitimately for our pride. We have in the Antilles vast colonies, and the South American States are united to us by ethnic and linguistic bonds. Our exclusion from the European concert is an act of injustice which may become a danger. Take up our cause, and from the very fact that we are seated by the side of the great Powers around the green cloth, our attitude, our prudence and our loyalty will justify the honor done us in restoring us to the rank that is our due.' Some time afterward the President said to me: 'I was much struck by all you said to me. I have looked into the matter, and had my ministers do the same, and one of them, after having tried to obtain the opinion of the most powerful man in Europe, has brought me back this reply, which I am distressed to repeat to you: "Never will the great European Powers allow to form part of the European concert, in the foremost rank, a country that now for more than three-quarters of a century supports on its breast the knee-pan of the foreigners."' And I, I replied: 'They are mistaken, and they insult us who fancy that we do not feel the humiliation inflicted on us, and that we need foreign opinion to impel us to be ready for every possible sacrifice, permitting us to rid ourselves of the secular burden weighing upon our consciences and making us breathe like those who pant.'"

I have since then a hundred times talked with Spaniards; and, whenever the conversation has fallen on this theme, I have surprised, according to the temperament of my interlocutors, sadness, sorrow, anger or exasperation painted on their faces, but never have I met with a Spaniard indifferent as to this subject when it was broached. "Gibraltar," as one of them, a statesman of mature age and experience, who played an active rôle in the conclusion of the recent peace, put it: "Gibraltar is a poniard, always plunged into a wound that has never been healed. We do not scream out our pain, but we never cease to feel it."

I quite understand that the English reader who has now an inkling of my thesis, without having given it as yet any serious thought, and without comprehending the full bearing of my words, should utter a cry of protest. "Malta and Gibraltar are our strong points of defense in the Mediterranean, our preliminary ports to Alexandria. They are ports of refuge for our vessels, our indispensable coaling stations, and centres of armament

and provision. Without Gibraltar and Malta, we should be neither at Port Said, nor at Alexandria, no longer masters of our water routes, and we might at any moment be exposed to the gravest risks. We never had the pretension, in occupying Gibraltar, of preventing the passage of vessels through the straits; but, knowing that we are secure there at Gibraltar, we can, if need be, sustain a struggle which we would not dare undertake if we did not feel ourselves protected by its guns."

So be it, and I risk arousing all sorts of outcries and contradictions, in depriving the English reader of his illusions as to the real effective value at present of Gibraltar.

Some time ago, I chanced to be on the Franco-Spanish frontier. I wished to form an idea of the real dispositions of Catalonia. I omit for the time being all mention of what I then learned in Catalonia itself; but what struck me is that, on Spanish territory, the fort of Guadaloupe, a formidable point commanding almost impregvably the course and the valley of the Bidassoa, was absolutely disarmed, or rather not armed, and that nothing prevented a French army entering Spain from this side. When I expressed my surprise, I was told that it was quite the same thing from the Bidassoa to the confines of the Franco-Spanish frontiers, that everywhere the forts commanding the frontier were unarmed. I sought to discover why Spain left its frontiers thus open on the French side, and this is what I was told:

"You know that on the other side of Gibraltar and at the extremity of the separating bay is the port of Algeciras, which, like Gibraltar, lies opposite Ceuta. England has spent three or four millions of pounds in the construction of docks on the side of the Bay of Algeciras. When these docks were constructed, the Spaniards had the idea of fortifying Algeciras, San Felipe, Majorca, Rocabillo, Almirante and other points of the same sort along the inner coast line of the bay. England succeeded in preventing this scheme by showing Spain that such a project would be regarded by her as an act of aggression against England, for her docks were, owing to the distance, at present out of the range of the guns of Algeciras, but that this would no longer be the case if intermediary points closer at hand were to be put in a state of defense. In presence of her energetic representations, Spain abandoned the idea of fortifying these points on the Bay of Algeciras, between that port and Gibraltar, and England, reassured, made no further demands. France, however, aware of these incidents, also resisted the idea of the arming of the Spanish fortresses on the Franco-Spanish frontier, and obtained from Spain the promise that the valleys of the Pyrenees, Bidassoa and the rest should not be exposed to the guns of the Spanish fortresses."

Such is the explanation given to me of the defenseless state of the Spanish frontier bordering upon France.

Now, the Transvaal war has proved many things, but one of its first results is to upset completely the theories hitherto adopted, and to destroy most oddly the results obtained by England in preventing Spain from fortifying the intermediary points of the Bay of Algeciras, between Algeciras and Gibraltar. England, of course, fancied, in obtaining this concession, to protect Gibraltar eventually against Spanish guns. But the Transvaal war has shown the transportability and the facility of provisional and effective installation of the heaviest artillery, at any point desired, and near enough for effective attack. The Boers transported their "Long Tom" as they might have transported a piano. They established it as solidly in the depths of the valleys as on the summits of the kopjes; and, in a word, the heaviest artillery, guns comparable with the most formidable pieces of modern fortresses, can be carried to-day, at will, to any point which the assailant may choose. The result is that the Spaniards now have the certainty that, if need be, they could establish the centre of their heaviest artillery at the point which appeared to them the most suitable, and that, if ever the time comes, for any reason whatever, as a consequence of a series of events now foreseen or not yet foreseen, when they would be called upon to enter upon a struggle in order to wrest the poniard from the wound which has never healed, the docks imprudently constructed under the shelter of Gibraltar would be within the range of their guns, and to protect them England would have to abandon them altogether, and make ruinous outlays to establish them on the opposite side, just under the artillery of Gibraltar, since the hinterland of Gibraltar, as well as the bay of Algeciras, belongs to Spain.

What I mean, therefore, and what I say without pretension, as any one may perceive, of establishing a technical theory which is beyond all criticism and refutation, is that to-day Gibraltar is no longer the impregnable fortress that it was, that the English docks would not be sheltered from the guns of the Bay of Algeciras, and that the hinterland of Gibraltar belongs to Spain. If Spain, for instance, in order to recover Gibraltar, hesitating before no sacrifice, were to make common cause with France, Gibraltar might be attacked from all sides, by sea and by land, by the combined armies of the hitherto hypothetical allies, by the

already existing fleet of France and by the future fleet of Spain, which is reconstructing her sea forces and has entrusted the task to France. I may add that Gibraltar, with a population which, in such an eventuality, would nowhere find a sure means of egress, is a *place-fort* requiring a formidable garrison, the very alimentation of which, coupled with that of the population, would form a crushing burden, difficult even for England.

I am quite aware, and every one well knows, that a Franco-Spanish alliance is at present merely an hypothesis. There are, however, certain grounds for supposing that it is not so chimerical as might be believed. France, of late, has manifested toward Spain the most kindly and most practical feelings of good will. She has concluded with Spain a commercial agreement very favorable to the latter. She has powerfully assisted Spain in the so difficult undertaking of the conversion of its debt. She has aided it in keeping an eye upon Catalonia, as regards the introduction of arms, during the recent piteous failure of Carlism in that province. Everything, in a word, goes to show that the most friendly relations subsist between these two Latin nations.

My meaning, therefore, is that the comfortable point of control held by England at Gibraltar has become of doubtful efficacy, and that this point might become for her, at a given moment, an element of weakness instead of strength.

Note that I have not supposed, for a moment, that England could abandon or simply restore Gibraltar, without exchange or compensation, thus weakening her power in the Mediterranean. No. But men of the highest authority, Englishmen as well as foreigners, Spaniards of the highest competence and intelligence, as well as English engineers of the most serious reputation, all have assured me that England to-day would gain by the exchange, if, for Gibraltar, Spain were to give her Ceuta. To shift the present Gibraltar docks out of the range of the guns of the Bay of Algeciras, England would have to spend four or five millions of pounds. And if in possession of Ceuta, in exchange for Gibraltar, she were to spend there the amount of money which the displacement of her Gibraltar docks would cost her, she would render Ceuta the most formidable, the safest, the most easily defendable, and the most suitable situation for her own defense in the Mediterranean, and on the very spot even where it is a question of protecting Morocco against the appetites of the world.

Moreover, such an act, such an abandonment, or rather such an exchange, would, as the Duke of Fernand Nuñez said, make Spain the most devoted, the most grateful and the most loyal friend of England; and the latter, which, very rightly, complains of the pretty general ill-will and almost uniform hostility against her, would find in this new friendship a consoling compensation for the unjust suspicions of which she is the victim. Certainly, if, as all the Spaniards with whom I have ever conversed have assured me, Spain feels so poignantly the state of things at Gibraltar, she will exchange Gibraltar for Ceuta with enthusiasm; and, if she refused to do so, it would be either because she is no longer free to do so, or because her distress, her irritation and sense of humiliation are no longer so profound as she pretends; and, in either case, my proposition evidently could not or should not be realized. But, if Spain is free to treat with England, if she is free to give England, in exchange for her recovered pride, not to speak of Ceuta, what the sincere friendship of a new ally can offer to a great country, I need no longer insist on what I have just been saying. Spain apparently is living in a state of sincere and lasting friendship with England. If, by the retrocession, or rather by the exchange of Gibraltar for Ceuta, England were to become veritably the friend and ally of a devoted Spain, she would at the same time annul the danger lurking in the question of Morocco's becoming a formidable apple of discord, around which might be let loose a universal war. So that thus also would England enormously serve her own ends, render a service no less great to Spain, render a service to the peace of the world, and aggrandize herself as well as Spain. And if all this be possible, it is needless to add any fresh arguments to those I have already given.

And now let me say this: I have sought to show in language, it may be, void of all precaution, what I said at the outset, to-wit: that England needs a well-disciplined standing army; an armed diplomacy, and, as a complement, the conquest of an ally. If my words bear fruit, I shall be still more happy than proud; if they are repudiated, treated with irony, or combated, I shall, nevertheless, have done what I felt to be my duty, and I shall stand by, a witness of any events that may occur, saying to myself, struck by the futility of all efforts: *Alea jacta est*.